

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 053778

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ORIGIN SSO-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011
DRAFTED BY S/S-O:HCOLLUMS
APPROVED BY S/S-O:LMACFARLANE
DIST: S/S-O ONLY
----- 003993
P 050132Z MAR 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USCINCEUR

CONFIDENTIAL STATE 053778

EXDIS

REF: KHARTOUM 619

FOLLOWING REPEAT KHARTOUM 619 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA
ASMARA
CAIRO DAMASCUS JIDDA LONDON TUNIS 3 MAR 76
QUOTE
CONFIDENTIAL KHARTOUM 0619

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DEPARTMNT PASS USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, ET, US
SUBJECT: CISCO TWO: PLF TO RELEASE CAMPBELL AND HARRELL

REF: STATE 51554 NOTAL

BEGIN SUMMARY. PLF MILITARY CAPTORS HAVE DECIDED RELEASE CAMPBELL
AND HARREL UNCONDITIONALLY IN SUDAN AND EXPECT RELEASE TO TAKE
PLACE IN ABOUT FIFTEEN DAYS. PLF, WHICH BELIEVES FIGHT FOR
INDEPENDENCE HELD UP BY USG MILITARY AID, WILL TAKE MEASURES
AGAINST OTHER US CITIZENS IN ERITREA IF USG AID CONTINUES.
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END SUMMARY.

1. DCM AND CONSULAR OFFICER MET MARCH 3 WITH PLF REFS IN OFFICE OF USDANESE SECURITY OFFFINEIAL, WITB LATTER PRESENT. PLF REPS WERE SULEIMAN KELM OF MILITARY WING INSIDE ERITREA, WHO CAME TO KHARTOUM FOR MEETING, AND AMDEMICAEL KAHSAI OF POLITICAL WING, WHO HAS BEEN IN KHARTOUM. KAHSAI, WHO WAS SPOKESMAN, SAID THAT PLF MILITARY WING HAS REACHED DECISION NCONDITIONALLY RELEASE CAMPBELL AND HARRELL, WHOM HE SAID ARE WELL AND NOT IN NEED OF ANY SPECIAL MEDICAL CARE. PLF MILITARY REP WILL RE-ENTER ERITREA TO MAKE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR RELEASE, WHICH EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT FIFTEEN DAYS. SUDANESE OFFICIAL ADDED THAT GOS WOULD TAKE CHARGE OF RELEASED MEN AT BORDER, TRANSPORT THEM TO PORT SUDAN AND THENCE FLY THEM TO KHARTOUM FOR HANDING OVER TO EMBASSY. KAHSAI SAID THAT DECISION TO RELEASE MEN MADE OUT OF HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS AND BECAUSE SUDANESE HAD BEEN ACTIVELY SEEKING THEIR RELEASE.

2. PLF REPS PRECEDED NEWS OF DECISION TO RELEASE MEN WITH EXPLANATION OF WHY THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN HOSTAGE IN FIRST PLACE, AS FOLLOWS. USG ORIGINALLY HELPED ETHIOPIAN FEDERATION COME INTO BEING WITHOUT ERITREAN AGREEMENT AND HAS SINCE PROVIDED \$200 MILLION IN MILITARY AID TO ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. INVOLVED TO AN EVEN GREATER DEGREE SINCE ESCALATION OF WAR IN FEBRUARY 1975, USG HAS RECENTLY FURNISHED PLANES, BOMBS AND OTHER WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION THAT

HAVE BEEN USED IN THE EXTERMINATION OF DEFENCELESS AND INNOCENT ERITREAN CIVILIANS. MOST RECENTLY, USG HAS DECIDED PROVIDE EPMG WITH F-5E AND C-130 AIRCRAFT. (KAHSAI PRODUCED PHOTOCOPIES OF PUBLIC SOURCE DOCUMENTS, E.G., FEDERAL REGISTER AND STATION DEPARTMENT

NEWSLETTER PIECES REPORTING DECISIONS GRANT MILITARY AID TO EPMG.)

3. USING KAHSAI AND INTERPRETER, KELIM SAID THAT "PLF WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE STEPS IF US ARMS CONTINUE TO BE USED IN THE EXTERMINATION OF THE ERITREAN PEOPLE". HE ADDED THAT THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION HAS REACHED THE STAGE WHERE IT CAN REACT TO ITS ENEMIES AS NEEDED AND THAT THE PLF WILL HENCEFORTH MAKE NO DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN EPMG AND ITS "PARTNERS IN EXTERMINATION". SUDANESE OFFICIAL INTERVENED TO NOTE THAT PLF RECENTLY REFUSED TO ACCEPT FOOD PACKAGES FOR CAPTIVES BECAUSE THEY HAD HEARD OF NEW

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USG ARMS SHIPMENTS. OFFICIAL ADDED THAT IF USG AID CONTINUES, PLF FEELS THEY "CANNOT BE BLAMED" FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO AMERICAN CIVILIANS IN THE FUTURE.

4. PLF REPS FINISHED THEIR PRESENTATION WITH ASSURANCES THAT ERITREANS BEAR NO HATRED FOR AMERICAN PEOPLE BUT OBJECT RATHER TO ACTION OF USG IN ASSISTING EPMG MILITARILY. THEY ALSO PROVIDED COPY OF LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 12, 1975 ADDRESSED TO ETHIOPIAN

AMBASSADOR IN BONN FROM "HUMANITAS E.V." WHICH DETAILS FINDINGS OF
EPMG VIOLATIONS OF GENEVA CONVENTION WITH RESPECT TO TREATMENT OF
CIVILIANS (COPY POUCHED).

5. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, DCM LIMITED HIMSELF TO UNDERTAKING REPORT
PLF PRESENTATION TO WASHINGTON AND EXPRESSING PLEASURE THAT
CAMPBELL AND HARRELL WILL BE RELEASED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, KIDNAPPING, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PRISONERS RELEASE, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE053778
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:HCOLLUMS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760083-0792
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760389/aaaadawy.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SSO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 KHARTOUM 619
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CISCO TWO: PLF TO RELEASE CAMPBELL AND HARRELL
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, CASC, ET, US, SU, PLF, (CAMPBELL, STEVEN C), (HARRELL, JAMES J)
To: USCINCEUR
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006